

TESTIMONY CONCERNING HB 298
Senate Fish and Game Committee

For the record my name is Chuck Rein. I own and operate a ranch in the Big Timber area.

I fully agree with each WHEREAS listed in the preface to this bill. Here is why:

1. Most landowner do not have a problem with hunters.
 - A. Most hunters respectfully knock on the door or call at a decent hour seeking permission to hunt.
 - B. Most hunters appreciate the fact that private landowners contribute significantly to wildlife habitat.
2. Most landowners consider wildlife to be a natural part of our farms and ranches.
 - A. Problems occur when wildlife numbers become too high and or when we are threatened with forced access.
3. Generally speaking farmers and ranchers find many FWP policies to be contrary to the best interest of the agricultural community.
 - A. Real landowner concerns are either poorly articulated or brushed aside by FWP wildlife managers.
 - B. It is apparent to many landowners that wildlife management decisions are based on politics rather than sound wildlife biology.
4. Sportsmen already have more access to FWP than do landowners.
 - A. Sportsmen rightfully have a place at the wildlife management table.
 - B. Hunters are well represented on the FWP Commission.
 - C. Several FWP employees are members of MWF or other sportsmen groups.
5. HB 298 provides for an excellent forum for landowners and FWP personnel to sit down and confront our differences in an organized manner.
 - A. Landowner/sportsmen relations ultimately depend on landowners having a good working relationship with FWP and vice versa.
 - B. The opportunity for farmers and ranchers to solve our core differences with FWP will lead to much improved landowner/sportsmen relations.
 - C. Once our differences are solved or at the very least understood and acknowledged hunters should be involved in further discussion.

For the good of landowner/sportsmen relations I urge you to pass HB 298 in a form that allows landowners and FWP to work out our differences.